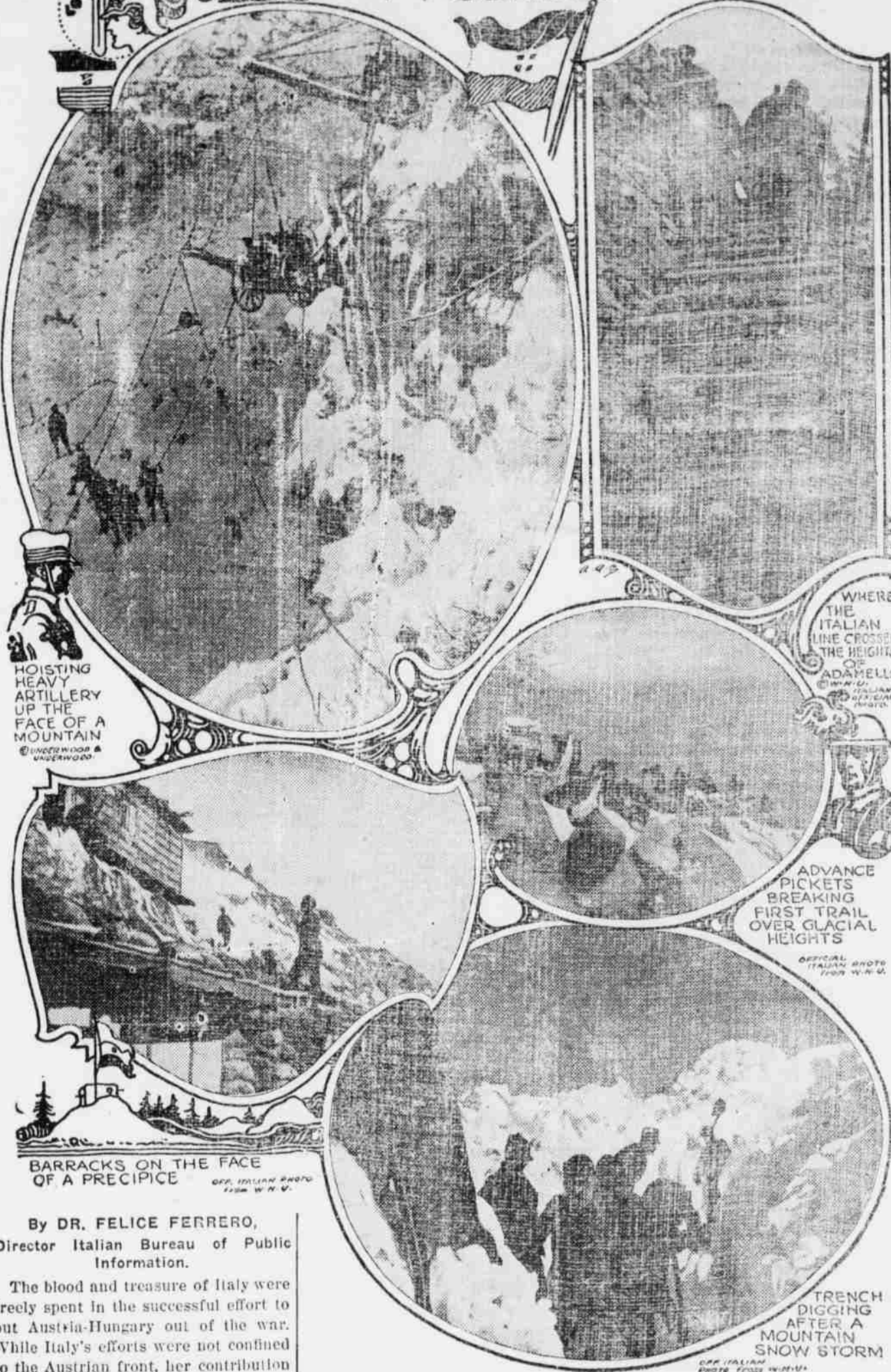


Italy's Efforts in the World War



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The blood and treasure of Italy were freely spent in the successful effort to put Austria-Hungary out of the war. While Italy's efforts were not confined to the Austrian front, her contribution to allied success was greater here than in the other places where her troops fought the battle for civilization. Her financial and industrial efforts have been equal to her military effort, and in all these directions Italy has not lagged behind her allies. That the nature and extent of these efforts may be better understood by the American public, I wish to review them briefly.

In considering Italy's military contributions, let me emphasize the fact that her soldiers have not confined their fighting to their own soil. Like those of her allies, they have gone far afield. They contributed largely to the glorious victory on the Balkan front. A large contingent in France first gave powerful aid in the defense of Rheims, then took part in the advance of the allied forces.

Italy Had 5,500,000 Under Arms.
Since the beginning of the war Italy has called to the colors little less than 5,500,000 men and has suffered a loss of almost 1,500,000 of them. Of that loss nearly 350,000 died in battle, and 100,000 from disease. Over 550,000 are totally incapacitated, either by blindness, loss of limb or tuberculosis. At the present moment the strength of the Italian army is 4,025,000, including the class of men born in 1900, who have been called to the colors recently. It may be said, then, that the nation's man-power has suffered a permanent loss of nearly a million.

But, serious as is this loss, Italy has inflicted an even greater punishment upon the foe. In Austrian prisoners alone she has taken approximately a million. The Austrian loss in killed and wounded is, of course, unknown to us, but even the most conservative estimates make it far greater than ours. In the June offensive on the Piave alone over 200,000 Austrian dead were left on the field.

Fighting Under Extreme Difficulties.
Aside from their achievements in other theatres of the war, Italy's soldiers have fought through fifteen furious offensives on the Isonzo and the Piave, inflicting terrible losses on the foe in each. These campaigns were carried on in mountainous regions and under rigorous weather conditions that taxed to the utmost the genius of the military engineers and the endurance of the troops. The foe, when hostilities opened, were entrenched in carefully prepared and seemingly impregnable positions, backed by a network of military roads and railroads. On the Italian side were deep gorges, unscalable cliffs, almost impassable glaciers, passes filled with snow and commanded by Austrian guns. There were no suitable roads or bridges. The surmounting of these difficulties has chal-

lenged the admiration of the engineering world.

Over 2,500 miles of roads have been constructed on the mountains of Italy and of Albania, and 1,000 miles of aerial cable railroads (Teleferiche) have been built to carry food, ammunition and guns over deep ravines.

Economic Difficulties.

The magnitude of this military effort can be fully appreciated only when one takes into consideration the economic structure of the nation and the nature and number of its population. One must remember that out of 35,000,000 inhabitants in Italy at the beginning of the war only 17,000,000 were male. This seeming disproportion is caused by emigration, which was largely composed of male adults. Out of those 17,000,000 only 6,000,000 were adults economically productive. Consequently the subtraction of the mobilized forces has had an acute reaction on the economic life of the nation. It is estimated that on an average only 100 adults remained in each town or village to provide in each case for some 320 children below the age of fifteen.

Furthermore, the traditions of Italian family life render the work of their women an economic factor of less importance than in some other countries, though it has been utilized to the utmost and is becoming more available as old traditions give way to war's necessity.

No Troops From Colonies.

Italy got no help from colonial contingents. On the contrary, the scarcity of native troops in Italy's colonies compelled the government to reinforce them with troops from the mother country. Nor has help come to Italy through the co-operation of workmen of neutral or allied countries. Italy, on the other hand, sent a large contingent of skilled workmen to France, thus allowing her to release valued elements for war. Furthermore, nearly 500,000 of our male adults residing in America gave to this great nation direct contribution to her economic and military efforts.

To meet their military obligations, therefore, the Italian people have been compelled to cut into the most urgent needs of agriculture and industry. Her continuous lack of labor has made the task of feeding the army and providing it with munitions a most difficult one.

And yet Italy, lacking labor and industrial development, lacking almost entirely coal and raw materials, has by a miracle of energy been able to create almost from nothing a powerful organization of war industries.

Difficult to Obtain Goods.

The very act of entering the war cut

off Italy from one of the sources of supply of manufactured products. It is not necessary here to enlarge upon the well known fact that Italian markets were largely under the domination of Germany and Austria. That is a situation that is as well known to Americans as it is and was distasteful to Italians. And it might be said in passing that it is a situation that must be guarded against by allied co-operation and sympathetic economic relationship when peace comes.

Mr. Francis H. Sisson, vice president of the Guaranty Trust Company, in a recent article on the economic situation of Italy points out that while Germany before the war dominated the foreign trade of Italy so far as manufactures were concerned, that country was one of the best customers of the United States in raw materials and foodstuffs. That writer also points out that it was the adjustment of her industrial and commercial life to the burdensome new conditions that has created an entirely new economic fabric in Italy.

"Italy's devotion of her resources to war purposes has been complete," says Mr. Sisson. "Her pre-eminence in the production of certain articles of commerce marked her as the chief source of supply for similar products of a warlike nature. Her ordinary production of automobiles, aeroplanes, turbines and heavy oil engines has merely been intensified and modified in the direction of such a standardization as would permit quantity production."

Financially Italy Responded Well.

Financially Italy also has responded to the demands of war with an openhandedness that has surprised even herself. From the first of August, 1914, to the end of 1917 the total expenditures of the state were \$8,895,600,000. Calculating on the basis of a monthly average expenditure for the war of \$210,000,000, the total cost of the war to Italy would be more than \$12,000,000,000.

A further proof of the financial effort Italy made for the war, notwithstanding her small means, are the five national loans. The first one yielded about \$200,000,000, and it seemed a great struggle, yet still others were launched, all giving greater returns, and the last one, after the disaster of October, 1917, yielded about \$1,300,000,000.

It must be remembered, too, that labor shortage has meant a food shortage. It has established a vicious circle. Our fighters and industrial workers have accomplished their work while forced to endure a regime of restricted diet that has meant real and continuous suffering such as probably is not to be found anywhere among the other belligerent peoples.

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